

EDITOR'S MISCELLANY

A PLEA FOR ALUMNÆ OFFICERS

A GREATER number of years than I care to recall as a member of our own association and an observer of many others has confirmed a suspicion which originated in my mind a decade ago when an officer.

We have a flourishing society with a large membership, a vital interest, good financial standing, and have had our vanity stimulated by much flattering speech and requests for advice from younger societies, until most of us plume our feathers and take credit to ourselves in the thought that it is something to be very proud of. All this is true, very true, but there are further truths which will bear some thought.

First, we might remember that the object of the society is mutual help, professional, financial, and personal. At the very beginning of the organization the first battle to fight was between a small faction which insisted upon the professional aids being given equal prominence with the financial, and the much larger faction which was either strongly in favor of only the financial aids or were too indifferent to give themselves the trouble of forming an opinion, and waited for the success of one side or the other to decide for them.

Time surely seems to have decided in favor of the small number who fought strongly for what seemed to them the vital point of our existence as an association. The battle begun then has never ceased. Every year it rages, often unseen; waged on one side by the few workers who consent to sacrifice time, recreation, rest, and peace of mind and body that this vital spark may be kept alive, and these, with an equally small number of the faithful sympathizers, are arrayed against the number who after paying their dues feel that their duty is done except to supply an abundance of criticism, too often unjust and nearly always irresponsible, of the *few who are doing our work*. I repeat emphatically, and wish it might be printed in red letters, the *few who are doing our work*. Are these few, or have they ever been, exempt from paying their dues too? Have they ever been women of leisure? What return have the rank and file of us ever given them but scant courtesy and scant thanks? I have seen a letter from a member who wrote of the delay and annoyance she had experienced by a mislaid letter to the society in which she expressed herself so caustically of an overworked officer that it was an insult. Knowing the circumstances, I could not help contrasting the two individuals, one giving every spare minute from a busy life to the society, at the same time enduring endless annoyance without complaint, and the other, as far as I can learn, has never lifted a finger to do any work for the society, but cannot endure one annoyance but she must needs heap indignity upon the head of the offender. When we pay our officers for their work we may have the right to regulate them, but so long as we demand that such service and such self-denial shall be given gratuitously, we had better spend our time giving thanks that Providence has given us *a faithful few to do our work without money or without price*.

We do not mean to do harm, but most of us offend through sheer thought-

lessness, thus making office-holding so unappreciated and thankless a task that we must fairly go on our knees to beg members to serve.

We are just beginning a new year, with many new officers, and I believe that new leaves turned the first of November are quite as good as if postponed to January first. As an older woman, an older nurse, and one of the oldest members, I beg your help, your consideration, and your sympathy for *the few who are doing our work.*

ISABEL MCISAAC, '88.

—*Illinois Alumnae Journal.*

DR. E. J. LEDERLE, Commissioner of Health in New York City, gave a talk on medical school inspection in Philadelphia on December 3. Dr. Lederle was followed by Miss Lina L. Rogers on "School Nursing." A large audience attended, among whom were Mayor Weaver, Dr. Martin, Commissioner of Health and Charities, and many others. They expressed much interest in the work, and hoped to establish the system in their own city.

MISS STANLEY, of the Visiting Nurses' Society, Philadelphia, has begun work in one of the schools in that city. The work is being very satisfactorily carried on, and it is hoped before long to have a staff of twenty nurses. As only one school has been given to make the test in, a great deal of time can be given to those needing care. The supplies are furnished by the Visiting Nurse Society, as well as the services of the nurse.

THE BERLIN CONGRESS.—Will our readers note that the International Congress of Women (as apart from the business meetings) will open in Berlin on Monday, June 13 next, and will last throughout the week, closing on Saturday, June 18, so that those who intend to be present should make arrangements accordingly?

The Quinquennial Meeting of the International Council of Nurses will be held on one day during the same week to enable the members to attend to their own business and, at the same time, take part in the instructive and social gatherings arranged in connection with the International Congress of Women, organized by the German National Council.

It is hoped that the nurses from the various countries will find time to meet together round the festive board at a banquet, where, no doubt, they will be inspired to the exchange of compliments of a delicate and flattering order, which will revive the memories of that most animated gathering arranged by the Matrons' Council at the last international meeting in London in 1899.

The official report of recent meetings, and the proposed programme for the meeting of the International Council of Nurses at Berlin, will be published in our next issue.

Miss Mollett, matron of the Royal South Hants and Southampton Hospital, is kindly interesting herself in the details of travel, board, residence, etc., for nurses and their friends who would like to make up a party of twenty to attend the Congress in Berlin, so that all communications on this matter should be addressed to her.—*British Journal of Nursing.*

Miss Mary E. Thornton is preparing to conduct a party of nurses from the United States. Her address is 120 East Thirty-first Street, New York City.